

Selective Exposure and Selective Perception Behavior on E-san Cultural Negotiation

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This research is aimed at studying the density of negotiation in E-san culture through the content of messages and investigating message receivers' perceptions of E-san cultural negotiation by using a mixed method. This current study employed a qualitative approach using a textual and content analysis; also, questionnaires were used for the quantitative approach. The results show that the communication in cultural negotiation can be divided into five levels. With regard to the impact factors on selective exposure behaviour on E-san cultural negotiation, most respondents expose themselves to the E-san media because they are fond of E-San culture. The impact factors on selective perception behaviour on E-san cultural negotiation indicated no mean difference in the perception of cultural negotiation among the different genders, occupations, ages, and incomes. There was a significant difference in the perception of cultural negotiation in terms of levels of education, native habitat, and experience/understanding about E-San culture.

Key words: *Selective exposure behaviour, selective perception behaviour, E-san culture, E-san cultural negotiation.*

Introduction

The cultural dominance in the state of Thailand occurred from social and cultural contexts of colonialism and the movements against central authority from several groups in the society. Such movements caused anxiety among the governing elites as they felt insecurity in the base of their power. Consequently, they tried to justify it as much as possible in order to maintain



the power of their class. This began in the year 1868 and took the form of Bureaucratic Reformation into Western style, centralisation of power, and the increase of personnel in government offices (Charoenmueng, 2001). It is considered political dominance and there are still problems justifying the ruling power of the authority.

As a result of the above mentioned, the government tried to cooperate with the media in order to dominate the country culturally and politically. This was quite obvious throughout the periods that Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram (the first prime minister of Thailand during the first period from 1938 – 1944; the second period from 1948-1957) was in power. The Act of Printing B.E. 2484 was enacted to control the publishing of the newspapers during emergencies or states of war. The act authorises the officer who had control of printing, or the Directorial-General of the Police Department, to inspect commercials, to revoke printing permission, or to close down a newspaper agency, if they were deemed as violating the orderliness of the state and damaging the good moral of the people (Siriyuwask, 2004). Furthermore, there was the use of radio broadcasts to promote the policy of cultural mandates, such as the campaign of spreading cultural mandates, construction of the new culture (language, clothes, music, drama, etc), the building of public opinion toward the concept of “nation state,” the changing of the country’s name from Siam to Thailand in the year 1939, and the composition of the new national anthem. All of these were to create a sense of patriotism in the people (Numnon, 1975), and they were affirmed over and over again through the radio. Finally, there was the management of television media, which actually was just a tool to retaliate against the opposing party and build up political influence (Siriyuwask, 2004). Then a question occurred: was everything that F.M. Plaek Phibunsongkhram claimed was for the benefits of “education in academics, society, vocational study, medicals and public health” actually the foundation of political dominance? (Boonkhetmala, 1996).

This type of media management was used by the government as a mechanism for standard establishment, presenting central Thai culture as the only standard culture in the society; mainstream literature was re-printed. Moreover, knowledge about Thai identity was established, and the images of “Thai people,” “Thailand” and “being Thai” were created. They tried to give explanations about who they were, where they came from, and what a unique culture they had. These images created representations that responded to the context of politics, economics, and culture at that time, through text and other kinds of media (Chanamun, 2007). That was how Thai culture came to be: it included clothing, traditional costume, and having Buddhism as the national religion. In this period, Thai culture was defined in a limited way and included only those who could speak the Thai language (Wongkul, 1998). This kind of media management affected sub-culture groups perceptions in Thailand, depending on the economic, political, social and cultural context. For example, Lanna culture perception was dominated and blended into the main culture until the local

culture almost disappeared. However, their economic factors and supportive politics enabled them to negotiate in terms of idealistic culture until they had their own space to express themselves. As for the perceptions of local culture in the South, there was disparity in social and cultural aspects, so they were not affected by the dominance of such idealistic culture.

As for the context of E-san region and culture, the cultural dominance by the government affected the perceptions and attitudes of other cultural groups towards E-san. It is a representation of reality that still needs to be improved and developed, mainly from Bangkok. Most E-san people accepted the image (Nasrikhen, 2005) of themselves as “Laos people with broken nose, eating sticky rice with bare hand, dipping it in fermented fish,” (Wanna-udom, 2006). The perception of E-san in the eyes of the people from the main culture and other sub-cultures are perceptions formed by personal experience. It is related to their interest and the responsibilities of the leaders in their group. Thus, the knowledge became an important tool for the governing elites to control and manage the people and the places in E-san regions more effectively, according to the needs of the new Siam nation (Wannachart, 2010).

Fortunately, that circumstance was not permanent. After the government successfully managed the media to gain cultural influence, E-san culture was swallowed up, yet, its context that facilitated the fostering of localism consciousness made E-san cultural negotiation successful many times throughout the history. The negotiation started with the book “The Legendary Treasure Map of the Blessed Rebel B.E. 2544-254,” the book “the Local Ubon,” “Kon Dan Kwian” music band, “Luk E-san” novel, “E-san Lamploen” music, the movie “Mon Rak Maenam Moon,” the movie “Khru Baan Nok,” the music band “Ponglang Sa-Orn,” and continued on to the movie “Phu Bao Taibaan E-san Indy.”

Some interesting questions are: did these successful E-san cultural negotiations lead to the emergence of a social phenomenon in which E-san people came to have awareness and feel proud of their own culture as presenting their message of cultural negotiation? Did the different message receivers perceive cultural negotiation differently with regard to impact factors on selective exposure behaviour and selective perception behaviour on E-san cultural negotiation? These questions can be applied as a guidance for maintaining the sub-cultures and inheritance of local intelligence from the ancestors.

Literature Review

In order to holistically understand all the impact factors on selective exposure behaviour and selective perception behaviour on E-san cultural negotiation, the present study focused on the communication concept and theories. In addition, theory related to behavioural science is required to provide additional explanations. Therefore, the researchers separated the presented content into two parts.

Part I: Theory Related to Behavioural Science

Theory of selective receiver behaviour: Severin & Tankard (2001), have compiled a psychological theory that shows the message receiver has a complex process of cognition which makes the purpose of disseminating and persuading the audience difficult, even if the message was transmitted or passed on to the receiver. The process of selecting the goals of communication derived from various forms, for example AIDA (Attention, Interest, Decision, Action), KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, Practice), Diffusion of Innovation (Knowledge, Attitude, Action, confirmed). This tends to be chosen through a screening process, the psychological perception.

Part II: Theory and Concepts of Communication

The Theory of Cultural Hegemony: Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), mentioned that if a group strives to rule a society, it must form an affinity with other groups first, then gradually dominate the ideology of the majority in a society reflecting the beliefs and interests of the ruling class. This is called ideology hegemony, comprising two dimensions, i.e. political and cultural hegemony that rule through coercion and consent and both imply indivisibility. Mass media are seen as the most powerful tool for the expansion of consent (Gramsci, 1891-1937; Kaewthep & Hinviman, 2008). Antonio Gramsci stated that although hegemony exists in a society, the power has never been stable/immobile or “one-off.” It is always in “the process of becoming” and there is always more than one means of dominance and control. Ideology has power to dominate people's thoughts. But where there is hegemonic power, there is counter-hegemony - a confrontation or opposition to the existing status quo.

Communication for Cultural Negotiation: The concept of message receiver suggested by Stuart Hall has some points in common with, and some points differing, from that of other theories. The different point is the comparison of the code perceived by the sender and the receiver. Hall said that the code system of sender and receiver may not be the same. In most cases, they are different. There are many reasons that cause difference in the code system in the encoding and decoding between the sender and the receiver. They are inconsistent and may contradict each other. These reasons include background, experience, education, occupation, economic benefits, political standpoint, gender, class, ideology, and culture. These differences between the sender and the receiver result in that receiver interpreting the message differently from what the sender intended (Stuart Hall, 1997; Kaewthep, 2004). Therefore, the coding system of sender and receiver do not have to be the same. Decoding can vary from “the preferred reading” or decoding the message in the way that the sender intended, “the negotiated reading” or decoding the message differently from the intention of the sender, but it does not directly conflict with it, to “the oppositional reading” or decoding

the message from an opposing viewpoint or contradicting with the intention of the sender (Kaewthep & Hinviman, 2008).

Identity Construction: Anand Kanjanapandhu said that identity is the coherence of a person with others in the society to express his personal identity of self and tell him how to relate to anyone (Charoenmuang & Panyakaew, 2000) . In addition, identity has a significant implication for social mobility. It expresses efforts of people in a society to seek social and cultural space to claim the right to live differently and equally with other people without being forced to live in a restricted area of society. Moreover, finding space to show resistance in everyday life without any conflict. Identity construction often manifests in ambiguity or mixed images. The struggle for survival of social identity is flowing and does not appear in any clear form. The identity construction is thus the representation resulting from the social process. Such representation is considered as ‘politics of space,’ in order to seize the space for expression. The process starts from selecting certain qualities which are distinct, vibrant, easy to understand and widely recognised, then reducing the entire identity to just a few qualities. The reduction consists of three elements: 1) exaggerating the qualities to make them easy to understand; 2) constructing the opposite of identity and 3) unequally weighing the opposite constructed.

Methodology

This research used a mixed method combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including:

Part I: The Study of Density in Cultural Negotiation Message in the Content of the Message

The study of density in cultural negotiation message in the content of the message was conducted by mixing qualitative and quantitative methods together, as follows:

1. Purposive Sampling- The media used by the message receiver has a native habitat in the E-san region, authorised to encode the message, and widely accepted in the his or her presentations of E-san culture. There were 13 E-san songs, 6 E-san movies (Phalangwan, 2002), and 3 E-san television series.

2. Content Analysis – This was carried out by using a coding sheet that shows types and frequency of E-san messages found in the content, in order to count the number of types and cultural message frequency that appeared through the media.

3. Textual Analysis – This was conducted by producing analysis tools that are concept-driven and data-driven. They include textual interpretation on E-san culture based on the theory of Roland Barthes, which stated that all societies have processes of meaning formation that are different, conflicting, and fighting. It is considered a fight for ideology that is going on all the time (Kaewthep, 2001). This was used along with the analysis of the data from the content of E-san music, E-san movies, and E-san television series.

4. Descriptive Analysis – The data was transcribed from the analysis of the content and document study, then it was arranged, interpreted, and connected in accordance with the objectives of the study, in order to indicate the density in cultural negotiation of E-san culture through the content of the message.

Part II: The Study of Perception of Cultural Negotiation in Receivers

The study was conducted by using the quantitative research method. The independent variables were the grouping of message receivers based on gender, age, education, occupation, income, native habitat, and experience/understanding of E-san culture. The dependent variables were the perception of cultural negotiation of the message receiver. This part was to test the hypothesis of the research, as follows:

Hypothesis

1.1) Hypothesis 1 – the grouping of receivers based on how various criteria (gender, age, education, income) affects the perception of cultural negotiation.

1.2) Hypothesis 2 – how the culture of the receivers (native habitat, experience and understanding of E-san culture) affects the perception of cultural negotiation.

Population and Sample

The study of perception of cultural negotiation in E-san and non-E-san people was based on the population of the receivers who had been exposed to the E-san culture in E-san music, E-san movies, and E-san television series. A sample group of 400 people were selected from message receivers who had consumed all of the three media above by using accidental random sampling.

Instrumentation

The online questionnaire was used as a tool that consisted of close-ended questions, open-ended questions, and a five-likert rating scale.

Data Analysis

The completed questionnaire was processed for statistical results by using a program of statistical analysis for Social Science to find descriptive statistics, such as percentage, means, standard deviation, and inferential statistics, such as t-test, Oneway ANOVA (F-test), and Pearson Correlation (Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient).

Results

The results of the study are divided into four parts to make it easy to understand: the density of E-san cultural negotiation in the content of the message, the impact factor on selective exposure behaviour on E-san cultural negotiation, the impact factors on selective behaviour on E-san cultural negotiation, and the selective retention of E-san cultural negotiation, as follows.

Part I: The Density of E-san Cultural Negotiation in the Content of the Message

The content of the message in cultural negotiation of E-san culture can be found on five levels:

- 1. Differentiating level** – According to the content analysis, it was found that the media has differentiating levels of E-san cultural negotiation. There were three E-san cultures found most frequently in the three forms of media: language, music, and clothes, respectively.
- 2. Conflicting level** – This is the establishing of criteria to separate “we” and “they” or between E-san people and other groups of people. The sender set up various opposite pairs in geography, administration, ethics, behaviour, and nature.
- 3. Resisting level** – This is the establishing of categories and arranging the hierarchy of categories in order to create the meaning that E-san is equal to other groups of people. The image representing reality that the sender used to position E-san culture at the same level as other cultures was found in all three forms of media was “E-san is rich in nature.”
- 4. Hierarchy Level** - This is the establishing of categories and arranging the hierarchy of categories in order to create the meaning that E-san is higher than other groups of people. The images representing reality that the sender used to position E-san culture in a level higher than other cultures were found in all three forms of media in both aspects: “E-san poverty is caused by the actions of others or drought” and “E-san people value the heart over the prices.”

5. Refusing dominance level – It is the creation of meaning to show that one is refusing to accept some issues that used to be under the dominance of the mainstream. The images representing reality that the sender used to position E-san culture in a level higher than other cultures were found in all three forms of media: “E-san people are full of wisdom.”

Part II: The Impact Factors of Selective Exposure Behaviour on E-san Cultural Negotiation

This study found that most of the respondents gave their reasons for media exposure (E-San folk song, E-San movies, E-San television series) because they are fond of E-San culture; they keep up with the media; and they are an E-San native, respectively. The conclusive findings were illustrated as shown in Table 1: the analysis of reasons for media exposure (E-San folk song, E-San movies, E-San television series) can be summarised as most of the respondents gave the reasons for media exposure because they are fond of E-San culture (34.50%), next, the respondents are exposed to the media because they keep up with the media (22.25%) and thirdly they were exposed to the media because they are E-San natives (13.00%), respectively.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of reasons for media exposure (E-San folk song, E-San movies, E-San television series)

Reasons for media exposure	Frequency	Percentage
Is an E-San native	52	13.00
Don't follow	3	0.75
Wants to learn the culture and cultural diversity	4	1.00
Interested	3	0.75
Watches for entertainment	1	0.25
Felt that E-San people were disdained, abusing	1	0.25
Homesick (E-San and E-San culture)	34	8.50
Fond of E-San culture	138	34.50
Watches as other	24	6.00
Favourite producers or artist	32	8.00
Keep up with the media	89	22.25
Nothing else to listen to or watch	16	4.00
Melodious content reflects society	3	0.75
Total	400	100.00

Part III: The Impact Factors of Selective Perception Behaviour on E-san Cultural Negotiation

1. Hypothesis 1: The categorising of message receivers with different predictors (gender, age, education, occupation, income, native habitat, experience/ understanding about E-San culture) towards the difference in the perception of cultural negotiation.

1.1) Hypothesis 1.1: There is a mean difference in the perception of cultural negotiation between the male group and the female group.

With regard to the comparison of the perception on cultural negotiation by gender, the results indicated that there was no a mean difference in the intensity of E-San cultural negotiation between the groups – females and males, with a statistically significant difference, $t = -0.31$, $p = 0.98$. The mean score for the male group was 3.83 (SD = 0.65), while the mean score for the female group was 3.83 (SD = 0.59). Since the p-value (0.98) was greater than the significance level (0.05); therefore, we can accept the null hypothesis $H_0: \mu_{\text{males}} = \mu_{\text{females}}$

1.2) Hypothesis 1.2: There is a statistically significant relationship between ages of message receivers and the perception of cultural negotiation.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between ages of receivers and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation was -0.08 and a significance level ($p=0.12$) was greater than (0.05). Therefore, age of receivers was not related to the perception of E-San cultural negotiation. Since the significance level was greater than (0.05) which indicated that, we accepted the null hypothesis $H_0: \rho = 0$.

1.3) Hypothesis 1.3: There are differences between levels of education and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation.

Table 2 illustrates that the group means of education was significantly different in term of statistics ($p = 0.02$); therefore, we accepted the alternative hypothesis H_A : at least one group population mean is different. The results showed that the differences between these four groups of education in the perception of E-San cultural negotiation were statistically significant, $F= 3.40$, $p = 0.02$. Levels of education were divided into four groups: primary school ($n=2$), secondary school/vocational education/associate ($n=24$), bachelor's degree or equivalent ($n= 183$), and graduate degree ($n= 191$). The mean score for the primary school group was $\bar{x} = 4.26$ (SD = 0.44), the group of secondary school/ vocational education/associate was $\bar{x} = 4.13$ (SD = 0.589), the group of bachelor's degree or equivalent was $\bar{x} = 3.87$ (SD = 0.63), and the group of graduate degree was $\bar{x} = 3.76$ (SD = 0.60).

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between levels of education and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation

Level of education	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Primary school	2	4.26	.44	3.40	.02
Secondary school/vocational education/associate	24	4.13	.59		
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	183	3.87	.63		
Graduate degree	191	3.76	.60		

Note: ** $p < 0.05$

The comparison of the perception of cultural negotiation by level of education displayed that the message receivers with graduate degrees perceived cultural negotiation less than the message receivers with secondary school/vocational education/associate at the significance level .05 (Sig. > .05).

1.4) Hypothesis 1.4: There are differences between occupation and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation.

The group means of occupation were statistically significant different ($p = 0.46$); therefore, we accepted the null hypothesis H_0 : all group population means are equal.

1.5) Hypothesis 1.5: There are differences between income and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between income of receivers and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation was -0.03 and the significance level ($p=0.53$) was greater than ($p=0.05$). Therefore, income of receivers was not related to the perception of E-San cultural negotiation. Since the significance level was greater than (0.05), we accepted the null hypothesis H_0 : $\rho = 0$.

2. Hypothesis 2: There are differences between a message receiver's culture and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation.

2.1) Hypothesis 2.1: There are differences between native habitat and the perception of E-San cultural hegemony.

With regard to the comparison of the perception of cultural hegemony by native habitat, the results indicated that there was no mean difference in the intensity of E-San cultural hegemony between the groups of E-San and Non E-San, with a statistically significant difference, $t = 0.58$, $p = 0.56$. The mean score for the Non E-San group was 2.75 (SD = 0.79),

while the mean score for the E-San group was 2.70 (SD = 0.94). Since the p-value (0.56) was greater than the significance level (0.05); therefore, we can accept the null hypothesis $H_0: \mu_{\text{non E-San}} = \mu_{\text{E-San}}$

2.2) Hypothesis 2.2: There are differences between native habitat and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation.

Table 3 displayed the comparison of the perception of cultural negotiation by native habitat. The results indicated that the means of group native habitat were statistically significantly different, $t = -6.27^*$, $p = 0.00$; therefore, we accepted the alternative hypothesis $H_1: \mu_{\text{non E-San}} \neq \mu_{\text{E-San}}$. The mean score for the Non E-San group was 3.64 (SD = 0.61), while the mean score for the E-San group was 4.01 (SD = 0.56).

Table 3: Comparison of the perception of cultural negotiation by native habitat

Native habitat	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Non E-San	191	3.64	.61	-6.27*	.000
E-San	209	4.01	.56		

Note: ** $p < 0.05$

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between native habitat and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation showed the comparison of the perception of cultural negotiation by native habitat. The results indicated that the means of the native habitat group were statistically significant, $F = 10.25$, $p = 0.00$; therefore, we accepted the alternative hypothesis $H_1: \mu_{\text{non E-San}} \neq \mu_{\text{E-San}}$. Native habitat was divided into five groups: Bangkok (n=46), Northern (n=54), Central (n= 55), Southern (n= 36), and E-San (n= 209). The mean score for the group of Bangkok people was 3.68 (SD=0.60), the group of Northern people was 3.69 (SD=0.70), the group of Central people was 3.64 (SD= 0.57), the group of Southern people was 3.53 (SD=0.56), and the group of E-San people was 4.01 (SD=0.56). This means that the message receivers group with E-San people perceive cultural negotiation more than message receivers with Bangkok people, Northern people, Central people, and Southern people.

2.3) Hypothesis 2.3: There are differences between experiences/understanding about E-San culture and the perception of E-San cultural hegemony and the perception of E-San cultural hegemony.

With regard to the comparison of the perception of cultural hegemony by experience/understanding about E-San culture, the results indicated that there was no mean difference in the intensity of E-San cultural hegemony between the groups of low experience/understanding about E-San culture and high experience/understanding about E-San culture, with a statistically significant difference, $t = -3.51$, $p = 0.73$. The mean score for

the low experience/understanding about E-San culture group was 2.70 (SD = 0.78), while the mean score for the high experience/understanding about E-San culture group was 2.73 (SD = 0.94). Since the p-value (0.73) was greater than the significance level (0.05); therefore, we can accept the null hypothesis $H_0: \mu_{low} = \mu_{high}$.

2.4) Hypothesis 2.4: There are differences between experience/understanding about E-San culture and the perception of E-San cultural negotiation.

Table 4 showed the comparisons of the perception of cultural hegemony by experience/understanding about E-San culture. The results indicated that the means of group experience/understanding about E-San culture with statistically significant difference, $t = -7.22^*$, $p = 0.01$; therefore, we accepted the alternative hypothesis $H_1: \mu_{low} \neq \mu_{high}$. Experience/understanding was divided into two groups: low experience/understanding group (n=183), the high experience/understanding group (n=218). The mean score for the group of low experience/ understanding was 3.61 (SD= 0.54), the group of high experience/understanding was 4.02 (SD=0.61). All this indicates that the receivers with low experience/ understanding about E-San culture perceived less of cultural hegemony than receivers with high experience/understanding about E-San culture.

Table 4: Comparison of the perception of cultural negotiation by experience/understanding about E-San culture

Experience/understanding about E-San culture	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Low	182	3.61	.54	-7.22*	.01
High	218	4.02	.61		

Note: ** $p < 0.05$

Part IV: The Selective Retention on E-san Cultural Negotiation

1. Awareness of self-identity – Overall, the sample group had a high level of perception of E-san people’s self-identity, at an average of 3.76. They were aware that E-san people know who they are or know that “E-san is E-san” at a high level, or an average of 4.28. Second to that is “E-san is Thai,” at a high level or an average of 4.22, followed by “E-san people are good people” at a high level of 3.91, and “E-san is Laos” at a middle level or an average of 2.63.

2. Perception of E-san region and E-san culture dominated – The sample group perceived that E-san region and E-san culture dominated at a middle level, or an average of 2.72.

3. Perception of negotiation of E-san region and E-san culture – In general, the sample group was aware of negotiation of E-san region and E-san culture at high level, or an average of 3.83.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results from the study of the perception of cultural negotiation found that the message receivers with different categorising are different in the perception of cultural negotiation.

Compliance with the concept of message receivers by Stuart Hall suggests that the code system of senders and receivers may not be the same. In most cases, they are different. There are many reasons that cause differences in the code system in the encoding and the decoding between the senders and the receivers. They are inconsistent and may contradict each other. These reasons include background, experience, education, occupation, economic benefits, political standpoint, gender, class, ideology, and culture. These differences between the senders and the receivers result in receivers interpreting the messages differently from what the senders intended (Stuart Hall, 1997; Kaewthep, 2004).

From the study on impact factors on selective perception behaviour on E-san cultural negotiation, it was found that the factors gender, age, occupation, and income are not correlated with the cultural negotiation. However, education, habitat, and self-awareness on experience of E-San culture are factors correlated with the perception of cultural negotiation of E-San culture. Compliance with the concept of selective receiver behaviour by Severin & Tankard said that receivers had three processes to receive a message; selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention, which have factors that affect receiver selection in each step when considered further with the concept that groups of people were categorised by the structure of economics, politics, society, and culture, as the unit of analysis. Therefore, according to the concept of Stuart Hall, the message receivers were not a homogeneous group. The categorising of receivers was in relation to the forms and meanings of the messages. It is not a static grouping but a dynamic one. For example, if the content of the messages was about nationalism, the message receivers would be categorised according to the type of nationalism, such as cultural nationalism, open nationalism, and patriotic nationalism (Stuart Hall, 1997; Kaewthep, 2004).

In this study, the content of the messages is about culture, and the receivers of the messages can be arranged into groups according to their habitats and self-awareness of their experience/ understanding of E-San culture. Therefore, non E-San receivers (Bangkok, Northern region, Central region and Southern region) have little experience/ understanding about E-San culture. They are able to perceive cultural negotiation of E-San culture less than E-San receivers, who have much experience/ understanding about E-San culture (Sirottamaphorn, 2009). The results showed that the decoding and interpreting were different

from the point that the sender encodes (the Oppositional Reading) at most was the stereotype of labourer as the representative of the people in the Northeastern region, since each audience type had different experiences, ways of life, and cultural backgrounds.

In this case, the most interesting variable is education, which is not directly related to the matter of culture, but affects the perception of cultural negotiation in different ways. Receivers with levels of education above a bachelor degree have less perception of E-San cultural negotiation at ($\bar{x}= 3.26$) than receivers with high school / vocational / diploma education ($\bar{x}= 4.13$). This is probably because the individuals with education levels higher than a bachelor degree are E-San people, but they are different from the majority of E-San people in education, economics, and social status. They do not feel dominated or oppressed, so they do not really perceive the cultural negotiation. Another possibility is that these people are highly confident in themselves and they decode the messages differently from the intentions of the senders. On the other hand the message receivers with high school / vocational / diploma educations had poor economic status and inferior social status, so they felt oppressed, and could perceive the cultural negotiation more. Receivers with primary education had even higher perceptions of E-San cultural negotiation ($\bar{x}=4.26$).

When compared with the results from studies in “Students’ Attitudes Toward Isan Cultures at Srinakharinwirot University, Mahasarakham Campus (Buarapha, 1992-1993), it showed that there is no significant change in students’ attitudes toward Isan cultures at Srinakharinwirot University, Mahasarakham Campus, with difference in students’ parents’ occupations, students’ faculty enrolled, and students’ demographic backgrounds. It may be that in people who have a high level of education, there is still the substance culture which should be relative to the native habitat. But in this study, level of education is a more important factor for the categorising of message receivers than native habitat.

Nevertheless, when compared with the study of Thai-Lao relationship in entertainment media: the case study of Lao identity construction in the film “Maktay Lok Talueng,” which produced some results on culture and direct experience of receivers that affects the decoding of Lao identity, such results correspond with the results of this study. Receivers who do not have direct experience of Lao society and culture tend to agree and acknowledge the identity of Lao constructed by the movie. However, the sample group with direct experience decodes the messages in various ways, depending on their experiences. The most interesting point is that receivers who are government officers or work closely with the central authority tend to strongly negotiate/resist this set of codes on Lao ideology, while general people or those further away from the central authority tend to have less negotiation / resistance towards the set of codes, or even accept the image of Lao presented in the film (Praphanturakit, 2008). Therefore, factors concerning authority of receivers have significant impact on the perception of cultural negotiation of message receivers.

Furthermore, in the perception of E-San cultural negotiation, the message receivers have high levels of perceiving E-San people as E-San and as Thai people, and have moderate levels of perceiving E-San people as Lao people. It shows that E-San people and Lao people are closely connected in history and culture. There is a higher level of acknowledgement of being Thai and being Laotian E-San more than acknowledgement of being Lao. From the study of the Thai-Lao relationship in entertainment media: the case study of Lao identity construction in the film “Maktay Lok Talueng,” Thai people in E-San region are likely to decode their identities as being Thai and being Lao, which shows that E-San people clearly acknowledge themselves as being Thai and partially acknowledge themselves as being Lao. It can be concluded from both studies that on the matter of self-identifying, E-San people still identify themselves as being Thai (dominance) although they often present themselves through media as being E-San, which is different from being Thai (negotiation).

Recommendations for Policy Implementation and Future Research

For Policy Implementation

1. The State of Thailand should provide space for people to express their political ideologies, a factor that has obstructed cultural expression during many periods in the past. Although the space may not be freely open, the room for expression can be widely open during normal circumstance but limited in case the expression might risk peace and security, similarly to the way space for cultural expression was given in the past. Also, to reduce the political and cultural conflicts, it is important to provide equal education development for every region in the country, because education is one of the important individual factors that leads to selective culture perception in the message receiver.

For Future Research

1. The communication of other subcultures should be studied for comparison and used as a means of communication to value those subcultures.
2. This study mainly focuses on media and recipients. Senders should also be studied in order to seek means of communication for cultural negotiation of the subculture, encompassing all elements of communication.
3. This study on perception of cultural negotiation focuses on studying how much the message receivers perceive the matter of cultural dominance and cultural negotiation. If there is a future study that aims to find out how message receivers decode the message of dominance and negotiation, from which standpoint and why, it would be more comprehensive research on communication for cultural negotiation and it would be beneficial for creating communication for cultural negotiation in the future.



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